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# THE JAPANESE POINT OF VIEW

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PUBLIC discussion of our present and future relations with Japan has been left almost wholly to the demagogues of politics and to the press. Even our Government has done nothing to disabuse the minds of our people of the ridiculous fear of the "Menace of Japan," or the "Yellow Peril." When it should have spoken aloud it has remained silent, or has whispered timorously behind a covering hand in the ear of State authorities.

It is little short of criminal to allow this anti-Japanese propaganda to go forward at this time unanswered and unrebuked. Its foundation is ignorance, its superstructure, self-serving falsehood. Japan is admittedly one of the world's great Powers. She is our ally in a war which is rocking civilization from turret to foundation stone. No American can point to any wrong, even the slightest, which she has ever done us or threatened to do us. Six thousand miles of ocean separate a poor island kingdom of fifty million people, only sixteen per cent. of whose lands are arable, from a democracy which numbers more than one hundred million, which owns a fertile continent, and whose national wealth as compared to Japan's is as Rockefeller's to a New York newsboy's. Japan's future, like England's, inevitably depends upon manufacture. To success in that, peace is vital—a peace that permits unrestricted import of raw material, a peace which alone enables the exporters to develop markets and create demands for their products. The day for the acquisition of great territory by forcible occupation—the day of colonization by conquest, in short—is past, as Germany is learning to her cost. Side by side, as allies, the United States and Japan are striving to defeat this

menacing German aspiration, and they will do so. Can it be believed by any mind above that of an anthropoid ape that Japan has contemplated, is contemplating, or will contemplate following Germany in a like career, and that, if she does, she will select for her first victim a nation many times stronger than herself, and at a distance which renders anything but a naval raid against our Pacific Coast ridiculous to contemplate?

Here is the simple truth, and it is time that it be publicly recorded: We shall have war with Japan only if we seek it. We shall have war with Japan only if our course of conduct toward her becomes intolerable for a proud nation; we shall have war with Japan only if we inflict on her insults and wrongs which will force her to do as Germany forced us to do. And further, let it be recorded that, actually, we have been doing this for ten years. If Japan had ever planned to attack us, we have in that time given her not excuses but reasons by the basketful. If she had planned to attack us she would have struck before the Panama Canal was completed; she would have struck when, from the standpoint of unpreparedness, we were as wise in provoking and insulting her as a ground squirrel half a mile from his hole would be in jeering at a passing hawk.

What, then, *are* Japan's national aims? There is need to sweep away one myth before answer is made. That is the myth of the "mystery of the Orient," the impossibility of the white man's understanding the workings of "the Oriental mind." Volumes of solemn nonsense have been written on this. The simple truth is that *homo sapiens* gets his name because he reasons; and in any instance, given a knowledge of the well-springs of conduct, of the customs, training and influences amid which a man has grown and by which he has been environed, and you can tell pretty accurately what that man will do because you know what you would do yourself. And this is true regardless of race or color.

So much for the myth. Next, for the understanding of Japan's mind and motives, it is well to recall a few facts.

Deeds of superlative courage were expected matters-of-course in Japan's sea-war against Russia. The young officers who performed them did not, and did not expect to, become popular idols, and their commanders in many instances did not consider that the occasion called even for mention of their names in general orders. When a Japanese

is killed in war his family do not droop in mourning. His parents deck themselves in gala attire to receive with modesty but with pride the visits of friends who congratulate them on having reared a son who has honored them in giving his life for his country.

This may be a mistaken outlook on existence. Whether it is or not is a consideration beside the purpose of this paper. But it is the Japanese attitude toward life, and as such is to be reckoned with. For it means that if the Japanese believe they should go to war, they will do so without regard to mercenary considerations, without counting the cost, but with whole-souled enthusiasm.

The Japanese neither worship nor crave wealth; but they earnestly crave a competency "for the glorious privilege of being independent." They love their country. Necessity alone drives them out of it. It is no exaggeration to say that, assured a competency which to us would seem pitifully inadequate, no Japanese would leave his land save for purposes of study or to make the grand tour. But when a country produces a superior quality of rice and cannot afford to eat it, but must export it, importing for its own food rice of an inferior quality, one may understand the pressure for existence which is implied. But the Orient itself is a sterile field for the Japanese laborer in his effort to secure his competency. In Korea, China, India, the struggle for existence is even more tense, the scale of living even lower than in Japan itself. What more natural than that they should turn toward us, not for spoils, but to gather a share of our enormous wages by honest labor. Think what it means to the Japanese cook, butler, or housemaid who in addition to food receives in a month what it would take a year to earn at home; and the same relation holds true as to their earnings in all other vocations.

Now the Japanese do not understand the antagonism which their business activities arouse in the Western States. If, they say, they are an "inferior people," why all this pother? But that they *are* inferior, they in no wise admit. They believe that with fair play they can hold their own against any people in the world, and they ask no business favors. When Western laws classify them as Mongols, they smile at such ignorance, for they know that one of the greatest events in their history was the repulsion of the Mongols under Genghis Khan in a sea victory comparable

to that of the English over the Great Armada. And not believing that color of skin denotes superiority, they are unable to understand a racial antipathy to them which they do not feel to us. Quite the contrary. During their period of reconstruction we sent them many educators, wise in all departments of Western learning, and so they came to regard the United States as in a special sense their friend and tutor amongst the nations of that new and strange Western World. They blessed us for opening their ports, little realizing that it was done solely for our own purposes of trade and commerce, and that we never dreamed we might be releasing a giant from the bottle which we uncorked solely that we might enjoy its contents.

Nor has that feeling of friendship died away, notwithstanding the strain we have put on it. Today the American traveler in Japan receives just what he gives. If he is sullen and superior he is met with indifference. But as he moves about the crowded thoroughfares his smile is met with answering smiles, and to his salute the children line up with magic swiftness and tear the air with their shrill "Banzais!" The Japanese of California, since our declaration of war, have offered an equipped, trained, English-speaking regiment of their countrymen to serve under the United States flag wherever sent, and they have made this offer privately lest their motive be misinterpreted.

Japan has had but sixty or seventy years of revivification. We need not speak of the marvel of her achievements in this short space of time. It is enough to say that in that period of regeneration she learned her lessons well. She noted that the white-skinned races own, or claim to own, all of North Asia, all of Europe, all of Africa, all of the two continents of America, all of Australia and New Zealand; that they control and insist on controlling India and the greater East Indian Islands, and that soon they will control Persia and Asia Minor. She learned, too, that China was to go the way of the rest, and she learned the method—missionaries self-imposed on unwilling nations; capital invested, and the appeals of capitalists to protect their investments; interposition by their Governments; reparation demanded, and exacted in the form of territorial allotments creating "spheres of influence"; fortification, domination, ownership. China, notwithstanding her immense population, presents a great field for development of many kinds. She lacks

everything of modernity. Manufactures, railroads, mines, are all for the future. Who should do this developing? The European nations, who, with both hands full, were still grasping for more, or Japan, who needed room for expansion and whose propinquity and historical associations justified her in extending her protection over her neighbor? What more natural than "The Orient for Orientals"? And what did she see? She saw Russia forcing a treaty on Korea which gave her a protectorate over that helpless nation, and she struck and eliminated Russia. She saw Germany wresting a nearby sea-coast province from China in reparation for injuries to missionaries, and making a Gibraltar of its port, and again she struck and eliminated Germany. She saw other nations growing feverish over the situation and feeling for their own spheres of influence in China. She saw China a republic in which not one man in a thousand knew the fact or would have understood the meaning of the word if told the fact. And she saw that it was high time, if the Orient was to be held for the Orientals, that helpless China be made to understand that Japan and Japan alone would exercise a hegemony over the Orient.

This, then, is the fundamental of her national policy: the hegemony of the Orient; and with what Western nation lies the right to say her nay? She will welcome the investment of Western capital in the development of Oriental countries, but she will not permit those investments to serve as excuses for establishing spheres of influence. She herself will undertake that all such investments are duly protected.

There is one more consideration which is vital to an understanding of the strain which we have been and are putting on Japan's patience and friendship: that is her attitude toward her nationals. If it be indeed true that America's "new diplomacy" guarantees protection to her citizens' lives and property only while they remain within her territory, Japan, it must be remembered, adheres to the old diplomacy and holds that her people and their property are entitled to her full protection wherever they may lawfully be. And that full protection, we may rest assured, will be accorded them without first figuring profit and loss in a ledger.

It is not only an extraordinary anomaly in government, but a perpetual menace to our peace, that while no State

may declare war or make peace, any State may by legislation or otherwise precipitate a war, against the will of all others, and then call upon those others, whose wishes she has derided, to fight her battles for her. California's attitude is that as a sovereign State she has the right to do these things, but she by no means proposes that in doing them she will bear the consequences alone.

What is the explanation of her attitude? Racial antipathy is an insignificant factor in it. Japanese men do not seek white wives; they are well satisfied with the women of their race. On the other hand white men are frequently attracted by the Japanese women. No, antipathy is due to economic considerations only. Its justification is declared to lie in the fact that the Japanese, living more parsimoniously, will tend to lower the wage scale. Let me give two illustrations: A friend of mine owns farming land near a small town in the neighborhood of Los Angeles. The land has abundant water. He appealed to the poor of the town to take his lands and farm them, rent-free for the first year until they proved what could be done, and on a small crop-rent the second year. Not one tenant could he secure. He then rented to Japanese on a cash rental of \$12 per acre, and when their trucks loaded with vegetables passed through on the way to the Los Angeles market the comment of the very men who would not farm the lands was: "Look at the d—— Japanese, taking the bread out of our children's mouths." California greatly needs small farmers and farm labor. The city of Stockton is an agricultural center. Its Chamber of Commerce recently declared the necessity of admitting one hundred thousand Asiatics to relieve this need. Organized labor is in bitter opposition—not because the men are not required, but because their admission will tend to cheapen the price of labor.

The second illustration is this: A friend purchased at retail in Japan a silver cigarette case of perfectly simple and unornate finish. The price was forty yen, twenty dollars. Its oddity consisted in springs which released trays. It was admired, and he took it to a prominent silversmith in San Francisco to have it duplicated. The silversmith said that duplication would cost at least eighty dollars, and he would not bind himself by that sum.

The economic question involved is only suggested. It is not proposed to offer a solution of it. That belongs to the

Government. No one desires to see labor cheapened; but if Japan, working at home, can send her manufactured products here and sell them at any such ratio as one-fourth the American cost, only one of three things can result: a tariff wall, a wage reduction, or cessation of manufacture in her competing lines. But it is desirable to make plain the principle that, being a governmental problem, the whole nation, not the Western States alone, is vitally interested in its sane solution.

More immediate than the question of imports is that of the treatment of the Japanese who are here or who may come here. It is folly that such a matter should be left in the air or brought to earth only by secret diplomacy and a "gentlemen's agreement," while the Western States feel themselves at liberty to legislate invidiously against even those rights secured to Japanese residents by existing treaties. It is absurd to witness the Secretary of State of the United States hurrying West to whisper between cupped and trembling hands into the ear of a Governor, imploring him to suppress State legislation hostile to the Japanese. We ought to be big enough to deal fully and frankly with Japan and set at rest every irritating question by formal treaty.

Such is the only course open to a nation which declares its contempt for "secret diplomacy"; so, and so only, will the Western States be restrained in the exercise of powers which they now think are uncontrolled; and so, and so only, shall we eliminate one very strong provocation to war.

In sum, then, if we want war with Japan we can have it either by interfering with her Chinese policy or by continuing hostile legislation against and harassment of her citizens lawfully resident here. While in the first instance war would be declared only as the result of our direct interference, in the second we may find ourselves involved through State action because of the lack of a controlling treaty. If we are desirous of throwing away all export trade to the growing Orient for the next hundred years, we are working admirably to that end.

F. W. HENSHAW.